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[Leigh Neuage](#) (July 6 1983 - August 16 2003)

THE

last

NOTE

Leigh sat in the middle of the front row in the balcony overlooking the stage at the great music hall. It was his favourite place to sit. Leigh's father played the xylophone in the City Orchestra and his older brother played saxophone. Leigh could **see** them both clearly. Sometimes they would sneak waves to each other.

Tonight was a special night. It was the last night that the City Orchestra would play here for a long time. The next day the orchestra would go on a tour around the country. The **music hall** was full.

Everyone was dressed very formally. Getting dressed up for concerts wasn't Leigh's favourite past time. But his father said it was important to always look neat and clean especially when going out in public, and even more so on concert nights. Leigh's brother, Sacha, did not like dressing up for concerts either.

Sacha was an excellent saxophone player. His Father had said, "he could be the best one day if he practices enough." He did not always like to practice but then again he was the youngest person to ever play in the City Orchestra. He still enjoyed playing with toys, computers and roller blading like other children his age. Sacha was ten years old. Leigh was seven.

Leigh knew all the songs the City Orchestra played. Most of the songs were classical songs and had been written hundreds of years ago, though some of the songs had been popular during the past thirty years.

Leigh thought the best song of all was the last song of the concert for several reasons. It meant the end of the concert, his father and brother were the only ones who played the very last notes of the concert and he liked the song.

The song was a Beatle's song that had been popular twenty years earlier. It was called ' *Yesterday*'. Of course when the orchestra played it no one sang the words to the song but Leigh would sing the words in his mind when he heard it.

The end of the last song of the concert was a special sound. Sacha would blow one long note while his father played the last few notes on his xylophone. All the lights over the stage would go from the soft colours they were during the concert to full bright white and all the people in the audience would stand up and clap loudly.

This night was different. The people in the audience were extra loud. Their clapping lasted longer, being the last concert of the year before their tour. The people in the audience continued clapping and yelling, 'bravo bravo' something that people liked to shout out at concerts. Leigh never did shout out 'bravo bravo' he thought it sounded **silly**.

The musicians on stage were beginning to pack up their instruments. Leigh felt very proud of his family and stood looking at the stage. Sacha had already left the stage, no doubt headed for the reception room.

After every concert there was a party. There would be tables covered with little sandwiches and plate after plate of cakes and cookies. Sacha and Leigh were almost always the first ones at the sweets table. They would usually have four or five pieces of cakes before their father would say, "Don't eat so much people will think I never feed you at home." But they would manage to have several more sweets before the night was over. Sometimes they would put pieces of cake in their suit pockets, something that their father thought was a horrible thing to do.

Phase Two

Leigh left the balcony when he saw his father leave the stage. He began walking down the stairs. There were a lot of people in the upstairs part of the music hall. Halfway down the stairs he tripped over a step and fell down. He hit his head on the steps. Everything around him started to spin, he tried to sit up but he couldn't. He felt very dizzy. People helped him stand. His legs felt weak and he felt very tired. He looked around at the people who had helped him up. He did not recognise anyone. As he walked down the rest of the stairs he tried to recall where he was. He even forgot who he was. He tried to remember his name and what had just happened to him.

Leigh followed the crowds through the front doors. It was a warm night. On the streets there were a lot of cars. People hurried along on the footpaths. It was Friday night in the city. Leigh looked up and saw a large clock reading

10:30 PM. Nothing looked familiar to him. He crossed the main street. A sign at the corner read, 'North Terrace' he shook his head trying to remember anything at all. His mind was blank. He walked down a narrow street. There was a huge furniture van with its back doors open. He did not see anyone near the truck so he climbed in and crawled over the furniture to the front of the truck. Leigh found a very soft sofa and lay down. Soon he was asleep.

A few moments after he climbed in the driver of the truck closed the back doors and drove away. Leigh slept all night. The truck drove all night.

Phase Three

The next day the truck with Leigh inside arrived at another city. The truck parked in the loading area of a huge department store. Leigh woke up when the back of the truck's doors were opened. He heard the driver of the truck say to another person,

"This doesn't have to be unloaded until Monday, so I'll be back then. There is no one around here so I won't lock the truck doors"

After a few minutes Leigh climbed to the back of the truck and looked around the large unloading area of the store. He did not see anyone so he climbed out of the truck.

Leigh walked through a door that led into the department store. He did not know where he was. He sat down on a chair and tried to remember. All that he remembered was falling down the stairs, getting into a truck and waking into another unknown place. Why did he have these silly looking clothes on? A suit, tie, polished shoes? He did not remember a thing.

All that Leigh knew was that he was hungry and that his head hurt. He looked around. He was in the men's clothing section of the store. He walked through the store looking at everything until he came to the children's clothing section. He took off his suit and put on a shirt that said *New York Yankees* on it, and a baseball hat that also had *New York Yankees* on it - now he felt normal. Then he put on a pair of sneakers with air systems and pumps on them that made him feel like he could do a backwards two handed double pump windmill slam-dunk. Of course he did not know how he knew what a windmill slam-dunk was but he felt he could do one or maybe even two. He folded up his suit and together with his shoes threw them into a trash bin. In the middle of the first floor there was a food section. He filled up with lollies and cookies. Leigh was feeling more normal all the time - if only he could remember where and who he was - things would be fine.

Leigh spent the weekend in the store. He ate in a restaurant, making sandwiches and eating a lot of ice cream. He slept on a very soft bed in the bed section and changed his clothes each day, even though his clothes always looked the same with *New York Yankees* on them. He washed himself in the bathroom. He even brushed his teeth. All he needed was there, except for his memory.

Leigh played with toys, read comic books and played with the computers. He put on roller blades and rolled around the store.

From the time he got there in the early afternoon of Saturday until Sunday morning he was the only one in the store.

Phase Four

Monday morning Leigh heard voices and quickly hid in a storage-room. The storage-room had huge windows and he could look out to the street below. Across the street there was a large park. In the park was a stage with hundreds of rows of seats in front of it. Leigh did not know what it was. But when he looked down at the stage he felt very sad though he didn't know why.

For the next week Leigh lived in the store. During the day when it was open he would sleep in the storage room. At night he would wander around, get food and change his clothes always putting the clothes he had on back on the rack they had been on.

He still did not recall a thing, though he could think properly. He could read and he knew how to operate computers and how to play computer games. But he did not know how he knew how to operate computers.

He was not scared. He thought he was in a dream. Other times he thought he was playing a game but didn't know what the rules were. He knew he was in a department store and that he had gotten there by riding in the back of a truck. He did not want to meet any people to find out what was going on yet. The only thing that was familiar was the stage in the park across the street from his hiding place. It would make him sad when he looked at it.

Meanwhile, Sacha and his dad had looked all over for him. They had the police help too. Sacha kept saying, "I know that he is alright." But his dad was very worried.

Toward the end of the week, Sacha and his dad decided to join the City Orchestra's tour. There was

nothing they could do by staying home. They left the doors of their house unlocked in case Leigh returned. On Friday, one week after they last saw Leigh they flew to the city where the orchestra was to play. The next day the City Orchestra was to give a free concert in the park.

Saturday morning Sacha was the first to wake up. "We're going to find Leigh today," he said.

"I hope that is true it is getting harder and harder to cope without knowing what happened to him," a said his father.

Sacha and his dad went to the park and with the other orchestra members set up. The concert began. There were a lot of people there, "Probably because it was free," Sacha had said.

Leigh was asleep in the storage area of the department store when the concert began. He heard the music, it woke him. He went to the window saw the people on the stage and the audience sitting in front of the stage. It was so -Familiar, suddenly. He even knew what the next song would be before it started though he didn't know why he knew that.

The concert went on for over an hour. Leigh wished he had a pair of binoculars so that he could see the people up close. He looked around the storage area but couldn't find any. Then he found a telescope. He looked through it. He looked at each person on the stage they all looked familiar.

The one playing the xylophone and a child playing a saxophone looked very familiar. Why was it all adults except for this one kid?

Finally the concert came to the last song. Leigh knew it well it was 'Yesterday by the Beatles'. Then there was the end of the song: Where Sacha played loud and clear one long note and his father played the last few notes of the song on his xylophone.

Suddenly Leigh remembered everything. He remembered the last concert the fall down the stairs and the fact that his father and brother were right there across the street. His memory had returned.

Leigh ran out of the storage room, out of the department store and after watching for cars ran across the street and up onto the stage.

Once again they were all together. Thanks to the last note.

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